

Oral History Cover Sheet

Name: James Barkuloo

Date of Interview: 2-13-2014

Location of Interview: Panama City, Florida

Interviewer: Denny Holland and Gail Carmody

Approximate years worked for Fish and Wildlife Service: 23 years

Offices and Field Stations Worked, Positions Held: Florida Fish and Game Commission, Regional Fishery Biologist, Project Leader, Anadromous Fish Project; State of Alabama, Regional Fishery Biologist; and FWS, Staff Biologist, Washington D.C., Asst. Leader, Cooperative Fishery Unit, Auburn University, Anadromous Fish Project Leader; Field Supervisor; Regional Dive Officer and Outer Continental Shelf Oil And Gas Advisory Board for Department of the Interior for Gulf of Mexico.

Most Important Projects: Restoration Florida Striped Bass and Recovery Gulf of Mexico Sturgeon; Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Advisory Board, SE Regional Dive Officer,

Colleagues: Gene Nakamura; John Foster; Lorna Patrick; Larry Goldman; Ed Crateau, Frank Parauka

Brief Summary of Interview: Born in Tifton, Georgia, Jim talks about where he went to school before attending Abraham Baldwin College and joining the Army in the 11th Airborne Division. Upon returning home he went back to Abraham Baldwin College before transferring to Auburn University, where he signed up for a summer program working for the Florida Fish and Game Commission under a Cooperative Agreement program. He moved to Frostproof, Florida for the job and shortly after starting work. He met a local lady and two weeks later they would marry. He ended up staying in Florida for a year instead of just the summer. He eventually would end up at Florida State University after returning to Auburn for a while. When he graduated from FSU, he got a job on the Florida Fish and Game Commission's Lake and Stream Survey traveling all over Florida and ended up in Panama City. After 12 years with Florida Game and Fish, he was hired by FWS in the Division of Fishery Services in Washington D.C. He was later transferred to Auburn University and back to Panama City, Florida, where he would eventually retire. Jim says he really enjoyed his time not only with Fish and Wildlife, but with the Florida Game Commission as well and felt they got a lot accomplished.

Denny: Today is February the 13th, 2014. We're in the home of James M. Barkuloo, otherwise known as Jim Barkuloo, retiree from US Fish and Wildlife Service, Panama City field office. Accompanying is Gail Carmody and we are recording on video as well as orally. With that, Jim, we would be interested in hearing about your beginnings, how you got started, where you were born, where you were raised; a little bit about your early life if you would, please.

Jim: Alright.

Denny: You can tell me your age too, or what year you were born, you don't have to be exact.

Jim: I'm 84. Well, I was born July 1929, in Tifton, Georgia, and I was raised there up until about fifteen years old. And for some reason my dad didn't like the local schools there, and he asked me to pick out a place I could go to boarding school, and where I could work and pay for part of my keep. So I studied a lot of literature, and finally ended up going to Harding College in Searcy, Arkansas, which had a high school academy. I went there when I was fifteen years old, and stayed a year, without even coming home. I got homesick, but I was so busy with school and interesting work that it didn't bother me. They gave me a job as stable boy, taking care of horses and taking students and staff on buggy trips.

Denny: How long were you in this particular school? All the way through..?

Jim: One, one year. I also got a chance to work in the dry cleaners there. That was good experience,

Denny: One year, okay.

Jim: I transferred from there to a place outside of Valdosta, Georgia, called Dasher Bible School. The craziest thing about that school was that they needed a bus driver, and I just got my driver's license at sixteen years old, and they had an old station wagon that they picked up about five or six kids around the neighborhood. This was a rural area and all the roads were dirt so, they let me be the bus driver at sixteen years old, so thinking back on it, I guess, it's sort of crazy knowing what I do now.

I graduated from Dasher high school in 1946, I came back to Tifton and went to Abraham Baldwin College for a one or two quarters until I joined the Army in the spring of 1947.

Denny: That was right after the war, right after World War II.

Jim: It was, and I quit there and joined the 11th Airborne Division. I went to Fort Benning to get my paratrooper and glider training, and went to potential leadership school up in Pennsylvania. Then they shipped me over to Hokkaido, Japan, where the 11th Airborne Division had their headquarters, and I worked in the headquarters of the Division for the time that I was over there, which was really nice service because it was less populated country on Hokkaido. It was real cold; a lot of snow, we had snow six months out of the year.

Denny: Yeah, one of the northern islands. Yeah.

Jim: Then they shipped the whole Division back to Camp Campbell, Kentucky, and that was where I got out in 1950.

Denny: Before Korea broke?

Jim: Yes it was three months before Korea started, yup. Came back to Tifton and went to Abraham Baldwin College for another quarter or two, and transferred to Auburn University. And in 1952, Spring of 1952, I found out that they had a cooperative agreement with Florida Game and Fish Commission for students to go down and work with the game commission for the summer and get college credit at Auburn. So I elected to do that, and went down in the spring of '52 and was sent to Frostproof, Florida, which I had never heard of before. The Game and Fish Commission had just started an experimental commercial seining operation on several lakes, one of which was Lake Reedy, just outside Frostproof. I had the job of net supervisor, keeping records of the weight and species caught, and making sure all bass and pickerel were returned to the water. The Lake Reedy operation hired a crew of five commercial fisherman, four from the same family.

I'd been there a couple of weeks and met a real pretty young lady, the daughter of one of the fishermen.

Denny: That has a way of changing everything, doesn't it?

Jim: Yeah. And...

Denny: Usually for the better.

Jim: ..She and I started dating every night after work and on weekends, and about two weeks later we eloped, with only her mother aware of it. Her father was so upset, that my supervisor transferred me to another lake for "protection". Her father calmed down after a couple of days and asked us to return to Frostproof. The marriage lasted almost 40 years until she died.

I decided to continue working there for a year instead of just the summer.

Denny: Where in Florida was this base?

Jim: Frostproof. Frostproof. You know where Lake Wales is?

Denny: Yeah.

Jim: Okay, it's between Lake Wales and Sebring.

Denny: Ok.

Jim: Down a bit; that's where I'm going next week.

Denny: Oh, good, okay.

My Father-in-Law bought us an old house trailer to live in when we returned to Auburn but we needed a car to pull it. The engine had given out on my old car, so I went to the Oldsmobile dealership, which was owned by my wife's uncle, and traded it for a Model A Ford, the only used car he had that I could afford, at \$400. So I traded for it, got a trailer hitch put on it, and pulled that old Masonite trailer, heavy Masonite, to Alabama.

Denny: Oh Lord.

Jim: I don't know what the weight of it was, but we pulled that thing to Opelika, Alabama.

Denny: All the way from Frostproof?

Jim: All the way from Frostproof. I know we did a maximum of thirty-five miles an hour all the way to Opelika.

Denny: But at least there were few hills to climb in Florida.

Jim: But the only problem we had was when we got to Opelika, I was going up a hill and a guy pulled out in front of me. I had to stop and it wouldn't start back, so I had to get somebody to pull me over the hill. And we finally made it to the trailer park, where we lived until 1954, then transferred to FSU, since I could not afford the out-of-state fees at Auburn.

Denny: What were you majoring in?

Jim: I was majoring in fisheries.

Denny: Fishery science.

Jim: In fact, I took all the fisheries courses they had, and when I went to FSU, I had all Liberal Arts courses because I had completed all my required science courses.

Denny: Already done.

Jim: Fulfilled

Gail: How did you pick Auburn and Fisheries?

Jim: I wanted a job outside, so went into forestry at Abraham Baldwin College. I didn't know there was such a thing as a fisheries course. They had fisheries and wildlife at Auburn. When I got over there and found out about it, I changed to fisheries.

Denny: Auburn had one of the leading fisheries schools in the south, back in those days.

Jim: And also I could work at the ponds making 30 cents an hour; they had a whole bunch of ponds, so I could work there and went on river surveys. That money helped a lot, the the out-of-State fees were killing me, so I found out I could transfer to FSU and have all my credits accepted, in fact I had all my required courses to graduate, just had to have a year in residence. My wife got a job with the FG&F Commission in Tallahassee, so we moved there to finish. When I found out we could graduate and I could get a job with the Commission as a biologist, we bought a new trailer and my wife stayed in Tallahassee while I started traveling with the Commission's Lake and Stream Project, doing fishery surveys on larger lakes and major streams. We started out at Lake Talquin, then surveyed the Apalachicola River, Dead Lakes and Lake Wimico.

Then we were assigned to survey the Northwest Shore of Lake Okeechobee, so they gave us a travel trailer for an office and living quarters. So we moved to Okeechobee City.

Denny: Set up.

Jim: ...and sleep in. Pete Crittenden became the project leader of that, and I was assistant. So when we moved to Okeechobee City, I moved my wife's trailer to Vero Beach where we had an office. It was like a River Basin's office but it was Florida Game and Fish; I'd commute back and forth.

Denny: How long were you involved in that particular program and from there, you went to where?

Jim: Well, I stayed on the Lake and Stream Survey when they moved us back Panama City in 1956, to survey the fisheries of North Bay when the County made plans to build a water supply reservoir here.

Denny: Here in Panama...

Denny: That was late 50's?

Jim: In April, 1957, I took a job as Regional Biologist with the Alabama Dept. of Conservation, but went back with the Florida G&F on Nov. 1 of that year as Northwest Florida Regional Fishery Biologist.

In 1958, I was made Project Leader of an Anadromous Fish Project, studying mainly striped bass.

.

Jim: That was late, it was, no, it was, let's see, yeah, late 50's. In the early 1960's, I was made Project Leader of the new Anadromous Fish Project, mainly to research striped bass in West Florida, concentrating at first on the Apalachicola River. Then in 1961

Denny: Early 60's.

Jim: And I got sort of tangled up with the Commissioner of the Game Commission, and he; I don't know exactly what happened, but one of the guys I was working with, they had a dispute and he was real close with the commissioner, and somehow I got in trouble.

Denny: You drew the short straw.

Jim: Yeah. So I started looking for another job in the Fish and Wildlife Service or anywhere I could get. Well, the only thing I found was in Montgomery, Alabama. Buck Byrd was Chief of Fisheries there and offered me a job, so I went up there and I stayed there about six months.

Denny: With the State of Alabama.

Jim: With the State of Alabama. And Jerry Banks called me and said that "We've got you a job down here," no, it was Red Heinen called me and said, "We've got a job down here and the Commissioner's gone, so you don't have to worry about him." So I moved back to Panama City as Project Leader of a new Anadromous Fish Project.

Denny: Was there much of a population there of stripers on Apalach?

Jim: There was until they built the dam and when they built the dam, that cut off the...

Denny: After Seminole.

Jim: Yeah, most of the spawning on that...

Denny: That stretch of free flowing river is necessary for the stripers to spawn.

Jim: Of course back then, we weren't as concerned about genetics and so forth, so we hauled a bunch of fish down from South Carolina and we stocked them in Apalach, which we found out later was a mistake, but we didn't know it then.

Denny: Yeah.

Jim: So we worked with that for a while and we even worked some on the St. Johns River and that's when I wrote the paper on striped bass of Florida, or the Florida striped bass and it was published by the Florida Game and Fish Commission.

Denny: And at what point did you shift gears from the states to the feds?

Jim: Well, next I moved over to the St. Johns River where we set up a temporary striped bass hatchery near Palatka to see if we could spawn the native striped bass from the river like they were doing in South Carolina. And, leased some property and built four ponds and a little hatchery building. And then we set up hatching jars, and collected striped bass brood fish from commercial nets on the St. Johns.

Denny: So they were a native species?

Jim: Right.

Denny: Okay.

Jim: And we were able to hatch striped bass there. And while I was there, I decided I'd try to go to classes down at Stetson, I was living in Crescent City, which was not far from Stetson. So I'd run down there and take classes and we stayed there for about a year and I graduated, got a master's degree there.

Denny: It's a pretty school.

Jim: Oh, it's nice.

Denny: Beautiful.

Jim: And the guy that was my major professor was super, he was very nice.

Gail: What was your master's degree in?

Jim: Beg your pardon?

Gail: What was your master's degree in?

Jim: It was in zoology. So my degree from FSU was biological science. So I went over there, my wife was going back and forth from Panama City to Crescent City, we had a house in Crescent City. But a friend of ours was staying at a motel next to the Hathaway Bridge, and he found out it was for sale and wanted to buy it.

Denny: The motel.

Jim: The motel. My wife and I, he asked us to go in with him because he couldn't afford it by himself, so we did, we went in with him and bought it. And my wife came back over and managed the motel and we turned it into a fish camp really. It was originally the Hathaway Bridge Auto Court and we renamed it the Angler's Motel and sold bait and tackle and rented boats and motors.

Denny: East side or west side?

Jim: It's the southeast side of the bridge there.

Denny: Okay.

Jim: If you're going towards the bridge, the old house is still there where we lived, it's called the No Name Bar now, [casual talk], but that was a real neat place.

Denny: So that became your anchor here in Panama?

Jim: It did later after I moved back, I stayed in Crescent City a little longer than she did, she moved back to take over and manage that motel. I finally finished up my work over there and closed down the hatchery and moved back over there.

Denny: Speaking of the hatchery, it was a short term operation or...?

Jim: It was very temporary to find out if we could spawn successfully.

Denny: Like they do in South Carolina at Monck's Corner?

Jim: And it was set up almost identical to their operation; we'd been up there two or three times and seen how they do it. So we used exactly their techniques, we'd injected the females, we'd they would spawn, and we'd go from there. We found out we could do it successfully and that was the whole goal of the operation.

Denny: So after you shut down the hatchery operation over there, were you still with the state?

Jim: Still with the state, but I came back and I had applications in all over the country with the Corps of Engineers and everybody else. And the only job I had offered, jobs were tight then, I got a job offer from the Corps of Engineers in South Dakota. And about the time I was thinking about that, Bob Webb and Alex Montgomery called me and told me of a job in Washington, D.C. in Fishery Services. So I talked to Dr. King and told him, I said, "I'd love to have that job, but I don't want to spend the rest of my life in Washington, D.C." He said, "Well, if you'll take it," he said, "after a year or so, I'll promise to be on the lookout for a place to send you away from Washington." I said, "Okay, based on that, I'll take it." So we packed up and moved to Washington, and I guess my kids were just starting in school then. So we lived in McLean, Virginia, a real nice area and had about a year there. And Dr. King came in one day and said, "We've got an opening over in Alabama in Cooperative Fishery Unit." So I said that sounded great to me", so I transferred down there and we stayed there a little over a year.

Before leaving Auburn, I was asked to be Watch Director with the Tektite Undersea Program in St. Johns, Virgin Islands, which was administered by the Park Service. Dr. John Ramsey, the Cooperative Unit Leader and a fish taxonomist, told me he would support me participating if I would make fish collections for him there. So we packed up rotenone, nets, scuba, formalin, etc. and met a military plane in Washington, D.C. for transport to the islands. I also bought two motorcycles for my wife and I, since transportation on St. Johns was a problem.

We spent about two months on this project, including the fish collections with the help of the College of the Virgin Islands. We were able to get a nice fish collection for John from the waters off St. Johns and St. Croix Islands.

About this time, I met Norman Vick, who was "Officer in Charge" of the Fish and Wildlife Service's Marine Lab in Panama City. He asked me about stocking striped bass in several places along the Gulf.

Denny: Shotgun.

Jim: ...St. Mark's River and everywhere else; in fact, I think they put some in there, I'm not sure. But anyway, when I got to Auburn, Vick was very strong in getting an office established here (in Panama City) and he had the backing of the "He Coon"; Bob Sikes, U.S. Representative from this area. And he and Sikes were big buddies and he told Sikes that he wanted him to get Larry Ogren and I transferred to Panama City. So I got called into the Director's Office in Washington saying "What are you up to?"

Denny: Stirring up trouble.

Jim: I'm not doing anything. He says, "Well, we got orders to transfer you and Larry," Larry was stationed in Sandy Hook, New Jersey with the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries. And he had Larry transferred here; I guess politics were different back then but it really worked.

Gail: And how did you know Norm?

Jim: He somehow contacted me about getting striped bass and I made a trip down; of course I was coming to Panama City with the motel.

Gail: Right.

Jim: Back and forth, so somehow I got introduced to him and he kept in contact with me regularly and somehow he wanted Larry and I, I don't remember just why he felt like we were the ones to...

Gail: The team that he wanted.

Jim: Beg your pardon?

Gail: The team that he wanted.

Jim: Yeah, I guess that's what it was. So anyway, we got transferred back and we started out here and we ended up back here. And that's when the Bureau of Sport Fish and Wildlife, let's see we were; I forget how it happened, but we moved into this office on Beck Avenue with the National Marine Fisheries, back then it was...

Denny: Commercial.

Jim: ...they were in the Research arm which was the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Fisheries. In fact, that lab in New Jersey was Fish and Wildlife Service. [Inaudible, talking at same time] Bureau of Commercial Fisheries; I was wrong, that was Fish and Wildlife Service. And this lab that Sikes was wanting to build here, it was Fish and Wildlife Research and when we got down here and moved into the Beck Avenue office, we had Gene Nakamura, Larry Ogren, several people from St. Pete lab, they were closing a couple of labs and I think one in Brunswick they closed and they're moving them here to man this research station.

Gail: The new one that was getting built.

Jim: And then during Nixon's Presidency, they changed it from Fishery Research to Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, I believe that's right; I can't remember exactly. But anyway, that's when they built the lab and they moved from our office out there. But Vick by that time, Vick was out, they found out he was a fraud and he didn't have the degrees he was supposed to have and things like that so he was kicked out.

Denny: Yeah.

Jim: And also I think they were getting him on criminal charges too because they had him for selling surplus military goods that he acquired.

Denny: That can get a person in trouble.

Jim: Several things of that sort, so; it was a pretty interesting time.

Gail: But originally wasn't the whole of the office to move to that new facility on the beach?

Jim: Yeah, yeah, I think so.

Gail: But then when the split happened between Nixon and Secretary Andrus, I think, then you all ended up having to stay at Beck and...

Jim: Right.

Gail: ...and Bureau of Commercial Fisheries...

Jim: They moved out there.

Gail: ...went over there.

Denny: Went to NOAA.

Gail: Right.

Denny: Alright, our Director John Gottschalk was removed from the Service and sent to NOAA.

Jim: And he was the one that interviewed Gene Nakamura, for this job here and hired Gene for the job. And Gene came down while it, I guess it was about time it was being built, and he came into our office and then switched over to; they worked with us on the Fisheries project some because we had Larry doing striped bass work and all kinds of stuff so we were really a cooperative group.

Denny: Way back when.

Jim: Back when.

Denny: Oh yeah.

Jim: Still are for that matter, but not quite in the same way.

Denny: So at what point did you transition from being just one of the boys to being one who had responsibility for signing their time and attendance reports and things of that type?

Jim: Well I had...

Denny: And what led up; you obviously had leadership or there was a pretty sorry bunch, one or the other.

Jim: (laughing) Well, that's questionable. The, let's see, I'll try to get this straight. When we got back to here, we were working primarily on striped bass at first. And then I got word from the Regional Office that they needed us to help with developing a study plan for Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas that there they were planning to move into the eastern gulf. And they even planned on having a drilling site at the Florida Middle Grounds, which was a very sensitive area, corals and all that.

Gail: About what year are we at, about '71, '72?

Jim: '71, I believe it was; I've got it there, it was about '71. And so I started working on that and I developed a monitoring plan and all that kind of stuff for offshore oil drilling. And I went to a lot of the meetings, went to; BLM at the time was in charge of the offshore oil and gas operations. U.S. Geological Survey was in charge of leasing and so, no wait a minute, that was opposite. BLM was in charge of leasing, and U.S.G.S was in charge of operations. So I went to talk to them and went to all the meetings, and went to some of the oil companies and so forth; Texaco was planning to drill out in the Middle Grounds. So we got that plan developed, I was working with, was it National Marine Fisheries then?

Denny: It would have been.

Jim: I guess it was by that time.

Denny: Yeah, it would have been.

Jim: So we worked with them some, too. But for some reason, we were the main ones designated by the Department of Interior to coordinate with BLM out of our Panama City office. Our Regional Director, Ken Black, was delegated by DOI to coordinate with BLM and he delegated it down to me, since I was with Biological Services in the Panama City office. Ken also delegated me to serve on the OCS Advisory Board for the Central and Eastern Gulf of Mexico. Anyway, for the next four or five years it seemed like all I did was OCS; it consumed us.

Denny: Was this the same time you were doing diving?

Jim: I was appointed the Regional Dive Officer for Region 4 about 1972. I became a Certified Dive Instructor about 1961 when the FG&FC sent me to one of the first NAUI dive schools in Ft. Lauderdale. I then held a dive school for all Commission divers; biologists and law enforcement, at the Cypress Gardens pool with underwater windows and speakers I could watch the divers and give them instructions.

Denny: But you had that responsibility from the very beginning of the program itself?

Jim: Yeah. I was one of the first divers they had, so I was the Regional Dive Officer and I had that job until the day I retired. I was getting a little bit old for that; I was 60 when I retired. That job took me to some interesting places to check out FWS divers; The Reservoir Research Station in Arkansas, the Florida Keys, and the Puerto Rico field office, which covered the Virgin Islands.

Gail: That's when Paul took over as dive officer?

Jim: Who?

Gail: Paul, no, it was somebody else.

Jim: Turner, Bill Turner, I believe.

Gail: That name sounds familiar.

Jim: [Unintelligible] Jacksonville, I believe, I don't know. Who is Paul?

Gail: He took over after that.

Jim: He did.

Gail: So now by that time the office is bigger, right? And do you have a team?

Jim: Well...

Gail: Doing OCS.

Jim: ...in about '72, I believe, ES moved in and then Ed Crateau somewhere came along; Joe Miller first, I believe, and then Ed Crateau took over Fisheries and we; I can't remember much about the dates but I do remember....

Gail: Were you a one-man show at that point when you're doing OCS?

Jim: ...Outer Continental Shelf; I eventually, I hired a secretary but also I ended up hiring Lorna Patrick.

Gail: That's when Lorna came on.

Jim: [Unintelligible] came in. And she was a tremendous help, and she went with me on all...

Gail: And she came out of the co-opt program.

Jim: Yeah. And she was good and she was my main other staff that I used.

Gail: So what happened with the Striper Program, was somebody doing it?

Jim: Ed Createau, and when he came along he took care of that and I think Joe Miller, so it was sort of shuffled off to them.

Gail: Now did Ed come in on the ES side or the Fish side?

Jim: He came in on the Fish side.

Gail: Fish side, okay. So when you got moved into OCS, then Ed came on and...

Jim: Well, I got into it from Biological Service, so I was...

Gail: I see.

Jim: ...drafted into Biological Services and they were given the responsibility for Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas.

Gail: Yeah.

Jim: And they put me on, I was on OCS Advisory Board for the Department of Interior, back then, to attend all their meetings and so forth as their oil companies [unintelligible].

Gail: Right.

Jim: So it got to be quite an operation for us, but it was only a two-person job here in Panama City; two-person plus a secretary.

Gail: And who was doing all the monitoring? Contractors?

Jim: That was contracted out by BLM. BLM did the monitoring but we helped develop the studies and approved the studies and then we had to review the status of all the, kind of, [unintelligible] permits [unintelligible] central and eastern [unintelligible].

Gail: So, you did that for ten years or so?

Jim: Starting in about '72/'73 until, I believe, I was still doing it pretty close to my retirement, but I'm not sure; I can't remember.

Gail: Yeah, we were still reviewing it as an office, but then you started transitioning, didn't you, after about 10 years to supervisory, too.

Jim: Well, Hankla called me one day and said he's putting me in as the supervisor to the whole office, and I said, "Do you have to do that?" He said, "Yeah," he said, "you can either do that or go to Atlanta." And I said, "Well, there's not much argument there, I'll have to take it over, I guess." But I don't know what date that was.

Gail: So was that all three divisions or just the OBS Fish at that point?

Jim: I'd have to take over everything, the Fisheries, the ES, and OBS.

Gail: And OBS follows one.

Jim: Probably just OBS, which was a perfect job, you couldn't ask for a better job than that.

Denny: Those Area Offices opened in '76, and...

Jim: I think it was in the '80's that they made me take over the whole office.

Denny: Well, if Hakala is the Area Manager and when he was, he was in Washington prior to coming to Jacksonville, he had been in Atlanta.

Jim: Larry Goldman was involved too; Goldman was an ES person.

Gail: So was it '84 or so when the Area Offices were starting to close?

Denny: Shut down, shut down about the end of '81.

Jim: Is that right?

Denny: Yeah, see I went to Jackson in, effective the 1st of July '77. That's when we activated; Bob Misso was ES and Jim Stewart was Fish. Prior to that was Glen.

Jim: McBay.

Denny: McBay, exactly, yeah. And that was in '77.

Jim: I lost track of time along there; I might have in my notes.

Denny: But anyway. The main thing is you became head honcho whether you liked it or not.

Jim: Oh yeah, I didn't have any choice.

Denny: That sounds like...

Jim: [Unintelligible] staying here with that and going to Atlanta...

Denny: I know, "We'll give you two options, shoot yourself or take this golden parachute."

Jim: But it worked out pretty good, 'cause I had good staff and had good support. I really didn't have, the problem was the paperwork. And I could always take off and go to Apalachicola if everything got pretty sticky.

Denny: That's a nice option to have, isn't it?

Jim: Yeah, it's a real nice option. And I took advantage of every [unintelligible].

Denny: I know what you mean.

Jim: Every chance I got, every chance.

Denny: I did that, too. So you made head man, let's say sometime tail end of the '70's or during that time. When did you choose to retire?

Jim: In 1989, my wife starting getting a lot of problems, medical problems. And we took her to different labs and so forth and couldn't get a diagnosis. I took her to Mayo Clinic in Rochester and they diagnosed her with ALS and said she had three to five years to live. So I came back and I turned in my resignation, so I retired in November of '90.

Denny: November of '90?

Jim: Uh-huh.

Denny: You retired one year after I did; I retired in November of '89.

Jim: Wow, you've been retired a little longer than I have.

Denny: One more year.

Jim: Let's see, 24 years.

Denny: As you look back, and you've had a while to reflect on your career as all of us have had, and there are some things that I'll talk about and there are other things [makes a noise] not interested in saying too much about. Number one, I think you've already answered this question, maybe not on tape, did you have fun?

Jim: Oh, I had all kinds of fun. I can't imagine a profession that let me have so much fun.

Denny: And not only with the job itself, but your co-workers.

Jim: They're all super people, the ones I can remember; the Florida Game and Fish Commission and Fish and Wildlife Service. The Florida Game and Fish Commission, we still meet every year, the biologists I worked with. And that's been going on for 25 years; the retirees.

Denny: I'm going to throw a personal observation in your oral history. I have yet to meet a person that is really, genuinely interested in natural resources management that ain't a good guy, a good person, be it male and female. And we've got fabulous people regardless of sex [unintelligible]. And just enjoy the life.

Jim: One thing that really impressed me was the Florida Game and Fish Commission, the people there were so nice and so easy to get along with, and they were so productive; they got a lot of work, got a lot of work. And the same way with Fish and Wildlife Service for the most part, still the same way.

Denny: Is there any one facet of your entire natural resource time, including state time and federal time, that you feel quite proud of; any one singular accomplishment?

Jim: Mmmmm.

Denny: That's a tough question to answer.

Jim: It is 'cause I don't really; a lot of times I just don't feel like that what I was doing was accomplishing all that much, but it probably did help in some way.

Denny: But the whole body of work.

Jim: May be a contribution toward it.

Denny: You were still here at Panama City and you retired in '90. Did you by chance happen to get to know, I think he was here, John Foster? I think he came here, worked on striped bass.

Jim: I know a John Foster, but he's not a; he's a limnologist.

Denny: Fish man.

Jim: Oh John, John, yeah.

Gail: Louisiana John.

Jim: Huh?

Gail: Louisiana John.

Jim: Yeah.

Denny: Or Cajun John.

Jim: I remember him, yeah.

Denny: We worked together; he was in the Jackson Area Office with us.

Jim: Wasn't he, let's see...

Denny: He hated being in the office.

Jim: Was he in Mississippi or somewhere?

Denny: Yeah Jackson, Mississippi.

Jim: Yeah, I was thinking.

Denny: He said, "Just give me a boat and shocking device so I can go have fun."

Jim: Yeah, I remember now. The John Foster here that I knew real well, he's a biological type.

Denny: He despised being in the office.

Jim: Well, I did too, I did too.

Denny: That's why Apalachicola was so appealing to you.

Jim: Oh boy, it was my escape.

Denny: Yeah.

Jim: Sure was, well that and Chattahoochee; we had the Chattahoochee project, which was really good.

Denny: I appreciate the opportunity to sit down here and talk with you, Jim. And we will conclude this by saying, thank you very much.

Jim: Well, thank you; good to see you again.

End of interview.